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## Research in the South Carolina Upstate

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# Research

## Research in the South Carolina Upstate

By Tommy Charles, Christopher Clement, and Terry Ferguson

Excavations at site 38PN35 in Pickens County, South Carolina, have been completed for the summer. Fieldwork began April 16 and continued through June 13, 2007. Because the site is located on a horse farm where the Furman Equestrian Team trains, it was necessary to erect an electric fence around the area where excavations would be conducted to prevent grazing horses from injuring themselves by falling into one of our open excavations. We were fortunate that the landowners, Mike and Jodi Robertson, and Jesse Robertson supplied the materials for the fence, saving the project time and money. Jesse Robertson used his backhoe to push the fence posts into the ground, and with Jeff Catlin, Roger Lindsay, and Mike Bramlett assisting they had the fence up and working in less than a day (Fig. 1).

Tommy Charles had foot surgery and was unable to take part in this field season, but Christopher Clement agreed to take charge of the fieldwork with assistance from Wofford College's Dr. Terry Ferguson as his teaching schedule permitted. Their initial efforts were to clean the previous excavated areas and reexamine a stone feature that was partially excavated in the fall of 2006. The feature is over two meters below the surface and has produced a radiocarbon date of 10,000-10,200 years before present (Fig. 2). Debitage was

recovered from the level associated with this feature in a one by two-meter unit excavated in the fall of 2006. A backhoe trench cut into a terrace edge near the feature this spring allowed for another one by two-meter unit to be safely excavated adjacent to the 2006 unit. As with the previous unit,debitage was recovered from the level containing the feature. Neither unit produced any diagnostic artifacts.



Fig. 1: Erecting the electric fence. (SCIAA photo)

Further geoarchaeological investigations consisting of auger cores, collection of sediment samples from profiles, and associated measurements of magnetic

susceptibility were conducted. Additional ground penetrating radar data was also collected. All new data from the geoarchaeological investigations are currently being analyzed at Wofford College.

The backhoe trench and geoarchaeological investigations allowed for the clarification of stratigraphic relationships between alluvial terraces on the site and the excavation into Pleistocene age deposits around two and a half meters below surface. There were no indications of cultural activity below the 10,200 to 10,500 levels.

Plans are to eventually expand investigations of the deep cultural deposits, but the



Fig. 2: Chris Clement maps deepest Holocene levels at 38PN35. (SCIAA photo)



Fig. 3: Excavating a posthole. (SCIAA photo)

equally important Woodland and Archaic cultural components situated above must be painstakingly excavated. This takes time, and because of the huge volume of dirt that must be excavated in order to reach the two plus meter depth safely, no attempt was made to accomplish that this season. Instead, efforts were directed toward excavating shovel tests across the site and the removal of the plow zone from selected areas to find the areas having the greatest research potential and to pursue and map additional segments of the previously discovered palisade (Fig. 3).

These procedures resulted in the discovery of numerous additional postholes, some of which were associated with the

palisade and others with potential structures. Several pit features were also located and mapped.

Five charcoal samples were collected from various features and sent to Beta Analytic, Inc., for dating. Two charcoal samples previously collected from site 38GR1 were also sent for analysis. Results are expected in July 2007. This will bring the

number of dates associated with 38GR1 and 30PN35 to over 30.

Wofford College students continued the cleaning, sorting, cataloging, and the preliminary analysis of artifacts recovered to date from 38GR1 and 38PN35 (Fig. 4). This work should continue in the fall.

Dr. David Moore, of Western Carolina University, is currently

assembling a prehistoric pottery type collection consisting of wares obtained from sites 38GR1 and 38PN35 and has agreed to serve as a ceramics consultant. We are fortunate to be able to draw upon Dr. Moore's wealth of experience with the prehistoric pottery types that are commonly found in the Southern Appalachian Mountains and that we are now finding on Upstate South Carolina sites. Also ongoing is the analysis of numerous samples of botanical materials obtained from excavated features at sites 38GR1 and 38PN35. The analysis is being conducted by Dr. Gary Crites at the University of Tennessee. As with Dr. Moore, we feel very fortunate to have Dr. Crites' experience with the plants and subsistence patterns of the Southeast to draw upon. We expect to have preliminary results for both the ceramics and botanical materials by late summer or fall of 2007.

Tentative plans are to return to 38PN35 in the fall of 2007 or the spring of 2008 if funding can be obtained for further study. If this can be accomplished, our objective will be to open an area large enough to safely excavate to the two-plus meter depth and attempt to identify the culture associated with the 10,000-10,200 years old stone feature.

As for the previous three years, our continuing research into the prehistory of the Upstate would not be possible without the time and efforts of our tireless volunteers and the support of the Archaeological Research Trust and several private donors. We are deeply indebted to one and all for their continuing support.



Fig. 4: Wofford College students preparing artifacts for analysis. (SCIAA photo)